

passed through the heat exchanger plant 6, the gas purifier 7, along line 8, and finally into combustor 10 and turbine 11.

3. The present specification very much supports the challenged limitation. For example, page 3, lines 7-10 states:

Alternatively, an inert gas such as high-pressure nitrogen may be heated and used to dry the feedstock, with most or all of the humid inert gas being fed into the combustor of the combustion turbine.

(emphasis added). Page 8, lines 3-5 and 15-18 goes on to recite:

The extracted nitrogen travels via line 106 to heat exchanger 108, where it is heated and then introduced into drying unit 14C. The nitrogen picks up humidity in drying unit 14C, and passes along line 110 to filter 68.

Fuel gas flowing to filter 68 [including the non-recycled nitrogen] travels along line 112 to heat exchanger 114 where it is reheated, and then added to the combustor of the combustion turbine in the combined cycle unit 22.

(emphasis added). In view of these arguments, the applicant maintains that no amendments are needed to address this particular issue.

35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 6 and 8/6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Schiffers. Schiffers does indeed teach separating nitrogen from the air, passing the nitrogen via line 28 through heater 30, coal dryer 22 and then along with the coal to gasifier 4. A critical difference, however, is that Schiffers specifically teaches combining the nitrogen with exhaust gas from the combustion turbine to produce the drying medium (see col. 2, lines 41-44; and col. 4, lines 61-63). This difference has now been clarified in claims 6 and 8/6 by specifying that the drying medium essentially comprises a high pressure inert gas.

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

Claims 6-8 and 10-12 are pending in this application. The applicant acknowledges the office having determined that claims 2-4 are allowable. Having specifically addressed all of the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action, the applicant requests allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,
Crockett and Fish

Dated: March 15, 1997


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